

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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INFO SECDEF WASHDC

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COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK TH

13 AF CV UTAPO

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MILI, TH

SUBJ: DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER ON U.S. MILITARY REDUCTIONS IN THAILAND

1. (U) THAI PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT ISSUED FOLLOWING FOR BROADCAST TODAY ON NEWS PROGRAMS.

2. (U) BEGIN TEXT MAJ. GEN. PRAMARN ADIREKSAN, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER OF DEFENSE, GAVE A NEWS CONFERENCE ON THE MORNING ON FEB 12 AT THE INFORMATION CENTER OF CHULALONGKORN UNIVERSITY, AFTER OPENING A SEMINAR THERE. PARA REPORTERS ASKED THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER REGARDING ANY PROBLEM FACED AFTER THE COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN COMBAT TROOPS ON MARCH 20, 1976, BECAUSE SOME NEWSPAPERS HAVE COMMENTED OR EXPRESSED SPECULATION THAT U.S.. BASES WILL CONTINUE TO BE USED. MAJ.GEN. PRAMARN ADIREKSAN STATED THAT GOVERNMENT POLICY ON THE COMPLETE WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. COMBAT TROOPS HAS BEEN PROCLAIMED ALREADY, THAT THEY MUST BE COMPLETELY WITHDRAWN BY MARCH 20, 1976. THERE HAS BEEN NO CHANGE AT ALL IN GOVERNMENT POLICY, WHICH REMAINS AS PROCLAIMED. SHOULD

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ANYTHING OCCUR AFTER MARCH 20, THAN IT WOULD BE CONSIDERED

AGAIN. PARA REPORTERS WENT ON TO ASK ABOUT A VIEW EXPRESSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT MIGHT USE UTAPAO BASE AS AN AIRFIELD FOR REFUELING FOREIGN WARPLANES, AND WHETHER THAT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PRAMARN POINTED OUT THAT SUCH A PLAN WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE, THAT WHEN COMBAT FORCES HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY WITHDRAWN THERE WOULD BE NO FURTHER COMMITMENTS WHATSOEVER. ON THE OTHER HAND, SHOULD AN EMERGENCY ACCIDENT OCCUR, SUCH AS A PLANE BEING BLOWN OFF COURSE BY A MONSOON, OR SHOULD A PLANE RUN OUT OF GAS SUDDENLY AND ACCIDENTALLY, THEN THE PLANE COULD STOP OVER FOR THE SAKE OF HUMANITY. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER PRAMARN WENT ON TO ASSERT THAT AFTER MARCH 20, WHEN COMBAT TROOPS HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY WITHDRAWN, ONLY JUSMAG WILL REMAIN HERE. END TEXT

3. (U) REMARKS, ATTRIBUTED TO PRAMARN WILL GET WIDESPREAD COVERAGE BY MEDIA HERE. AMONG FOREIGN NEWSMEN, ONLY REUTERS AND KYODO HAVE SOUGHT MISSION COMMENT. WE REMINDED THEM THAT "THERE ARE CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THAI AND U.S. OFFICIALS ON THE REDUCTION OF U.S. FORCES IN THAILAND, AND WHEN DECISIONS ARE REACHED THEY ARE ANNOUNCED JOINTLY BY THE TWO GOVERNMENTS."

4. (C) COMMENT: ON SUBJECT OF RESIDUAL, RTG CONTINUES TO SPEAK PUBLICLY WITH MANY VOICES, MANY NUANCES, SUSCEPTIBLE TO MANY INTERPRETATIONS. LIKE PRAMARN, SOME RTG VOICES TRY TO LEAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE REMAINING GROUP WILL BE VERY SMALL. OTHERS, IN THE GUISE OF "THAI SOURCES" TALK OF 4,00 TO 5,000 REMAINING. ONE RARE VOICE, REPORTED BY AP FEB 3, MENTIONED THE REAL TARGET OF 3,000. THIS FLURRY OF REMARKS AND SPECULATION ABOUT RESIDUAL HAS SO FAR ATTRACTED LITTLE RESPONSE FROM THE PUBLIC.

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